

REMARKS

The Examiner objected to claim 1 due to a minor informality. The Examiner rejected claims 1-7 and 19-26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Wilcox (1,963,057). The Examiner also rejected claims 1-8 and 19-27 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by McNeil (3,972,529).

Each of these objections and rejections is addressed individually below.

The Claim Objections:

The Examiner objected to the claims due to a minor informality. Specifically, the Examiner objected to claim 1 due to a minor typographical error. Claim 1 has been amended to correct this typographical error as set forth above. It is therefore submitted that this objection has now been overcome.

The Claim Rejections:

The Examiner rejected claims 1-7 and 19-26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wilcox (1,963,057). The Examiner also rejected claims 1-8, and 19-27 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by McNeil (3,972,529).

Section 102(b) Rejection of Claims 1, 19, and 23:

According to the Office Action, Wilcox discloses a hollow tube where the wall has two different thicknesses. However, this is not Applicants' claimed invention. The invention relates to a tube having a half with one thickness and another half with a different thickness, such that the player can determine the orientation of the handle, because one half of the handle (such as the upper half or the lower half) has a larger thickness. Claims 1, 19, and 23 each generally protect this feature in different ways.

For example, claim 1 requires that one half of the handle have a location with a first distance that is greater than the distance throughout the opposing second half of the handle at a given cross-sectional location. Claim 1 also requires a one-piece hollow tube with varying wall thicknesses. There is no wall thickness differences in Wilcox as the grooves all have the same wall thickness (as measured between the outer wall and the inner wall). Further, McNeil is formed of multiple pieces and is therefore not a one-piece tube. It is therefore submitted that claim 1 defines over each of the Wilcox and McNeil references. The Wilcox and McNeil references — like the Hoult reference addressed in the last response to office action — does not teach

differences in wall thicknesses, but instead teaches folds in the tube to form four grooves spaced around the periphery of the tube. Additionally, McNeil teaches a multi-piece tube.

Claim 19 requires that one half of the handle have a first thickness substantially throughout one half of the handle that is greater than a second thickness that is disposed substantially throughout the other half of the handle. As discussed above, this is not taught or suggested by any of the references of record. Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 19 defines over each of the Wilcox and McNeil references.

Claim 23 also requires that one half of the handle have a first thickness substantially throughout the half that is greater than a second thickness that is disposed substantially throughout the other half. Claim 23 also requires a continuous surface. The Wilcox tube does not have a continuous outer surface, but instead includes grooves formed therein that provide a discontinuity. Therefore, for at least the reasons discussed above, it is thus submitted that claim 23 is also allowable over Wilcox and McNeil.

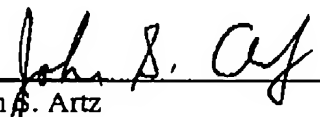
Conclusion:

It is respectfully submitted that all objections and rejections of record have been overcome and that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. A notice of allowance is therefore earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner should have any questions, he is urged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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